

Parent FAQs

One to one iPads in Key Stage 2

At The Marist, our approach to teaching and learning is rooted in our mission: *“With Christ as our guide we learn, we love, we achieve together.”* Guided by Christ’s example and the Gospel values, we aim to nurture confident, curious and compassionate learners who thrive spiritually, academically and personally.

Our use of one-to-one iPads in Key Stage 2 reflects this commitment. Technology is not used for its own sake, but as a purposeful tool that strengthens high-quality teaching, deepens understanding and enables every child to achieve their full potential. Lessons remain grounded in strong pedagogy, rich discussion and meaningful interactions with teachers. The iPads simply enhance what great teaching already does: personalise learning, support independence, remove barriers and enable timely, high-quality feedback.

A key part of preparing children for life in all its fullness is ensuring they develop strong digital literacy — the knowledge, confidence and discernment to use technology safely, responsibly and creatively. In a world where digital skills are increasingly essential, our structured and well-supervised approach helps children build healthy habits, critical thinking and the ability to use technology as a tool for learning rather than entertainment.

We remain committed to the qualities of a Marist Learner — enthusiasm, perseverance, confidence, collaboration, independence and reflection — and our digital strategy is designed to support these values, not replace them. Children continue to work in books, practise handwriting, engage in practical tasks and think deeply. The devices allow teachers to tailor learning more effectively so that all children can succeed.

The following FAQs explain how iPads are used day-to-day, how they support safety and wellbeing, and how they help us deliver the rich, balanced and loving education that sits at the heart of our school.

Day-to-Day Use

How much time do children spend on iPads each day?

The time on devices is staggered throughout the day and is never in one continuous session. There are plenty of lessons where iPads are not used at all, such as Big Write, RE and most maths tasks (except for the use of digital manipulatives in Power Maths which they use alongside their exercise books).

For example, a child may complete their Flash Back 4 questions briefly at the start of the lesson, and then not use the device again until completing a task 15 minutes later. iPad use is always teacher led and task specific, students never have an opportunity to them during unstructured time.

Are children staring at screens for long periods?

No. iPad use is broken into short, purposeful tasks. Children are not continuously on their devices for extended periods.

Which lessons use iPads?

iPads are currently used in the following subjects:

- English
- Maths — Flash Back 4 only and when using digital manipulatives
- Master Readers — for tasks only (all reading of texts takes place in books)
- Geography
- Latin
- History
- Science — where appropriate

Naturally, there will be lessons within these subjects where a device is not the right tool — for example, a debate lesson, creating a poster or a science experiment. In those cases, children will work in books as normal.

Are iPads used for every lesson?

No. There are always lessons where books and traditional methods are the right approach. The teacher will always use their professional judgement to decide on the best tool for the task.

How do lessons work and what teacher interactions are there?

Lessons with one-to-one devices follow the same structure as lessons without. The key difference is that teachers now have access to real-time data from children's work as the lesson unfolds. This allows the teacher to see how every child is progressing live and adapt the direction of the lesson accordingly — for example, reteaching a concept to a small group or extending a child who has grasped the task quickly.

This makes lessons significantly more flexible and responsive.

How do you teach children to use technology safely and responsibly?

We believe that one-to-one iPads are not just learning tools — they are an important part of helping children develop the digital responsibility and discernment they will need as they move through school and into adulthood. Alongside our filtering, monitoring and safety systems, we explicitly teach pupils how to use technology wisely, respectfully and safely.

Through our computing, PSHE and online-safety curriculum, children learn about:

- keeping personal information private
 - recognising reliable information online
 - understanding their digital footprint
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- using technology kindly and respectfully
- balancing screen use with healthy offline habits

making thoughtful choices about when technology *is* and *is not* the right tool by introducing iPads only from Year 3 onwards and using them in structured, guided ways, we ensure pupils build strong digital literacy skills while developing safe, responsible habits that will serve them well in later life.

B Standards & Expectations

What are the expectations in terms of pen colours and presentation?

Presentation expectations on iPads mirror those in books. Children are told which pen colours they may use and the appropriate pen thickness for the task. The same high standards of presentation that teachers expect in books apply equally when working on a device — there is no relaxation of standards because the medium has changed.

Will handwriting and posture suffer because of iPads?

Expectations for handwriting and posture remain the same as when writing in books. Research shows that writing with a stylus engages very similar fine-motor and cognitive processes to traditional pen-and-paper, and several studies have found no significant differences in learning outcomes between stylus writing and handwriting; our own research over the last 12 months supports this.

Importantly, we do not introduce iPads until Year 3, when children's fine-motor control and handwriting foundations are already well-established. This means the stylus supports — rather than replaces — the skills they have built lower down the school. Children also continue to practise handwriting regularly in books and use paper-feel screen covers that mimic real writing friction meaning their handwriting and posture remain strong and fully supported.

Digital Literacy includes choosing the right tool for the right task; something we regularly talk to the children about, which is why Big Write, for example, is always completed in books.

C Safety, Access & Online Safety

Can children access the internet?

Yes, but only in a very limited and carefully controlled way. Internet access is heavily filtered and monitored using the Lightspeed filtering service, which is overseen by both the school and the Xavier IT team. Children are only directed to use the internet when the teacher specifically requires it as part of a research-based lesson. They cannot freely browse the web and all access is purposeful and supervised.

How do you ensure online safety?

All devices are managed through the school's secure system. Internet access is filtered and monitored at all times via the Lightspeed filtering service. Children cannot access social media, messaging platforms, or any non-educational sites. The software we use allows us to lock students into one app or website. This means that they cannot misuse the iPad or find their way onto something they should not be working on.

What apps do children have access to?

Children only have access to a limited set of educational apps, which are controlled and managed centrally by the school and Xavier IT. They cannot download apps independently or access inappropriate content. We predominantly use GoodNotes Classroom, Safari, Power Maths, Times table Rockstars and Purple Mash

Can children message each other on the iPads?

No. Children do not have access to any messaging services on their school iPads. The devices are configured purely for educational tasks and there is no facility for children to communicate with one another through the device.

How does the teacher monitor iPad use?

Teachers have full oversight of all devices during lessons. They can:

- Lock iPads remotely when they are not needed for the current task
- Monitor every child's screen live to ensure children stay on task
- Provide instant feedback that appears directly on the child's device
- Lock the iPads into one particular app that they are using to complete a task

This has also proved incredibly beneficial for whole-class monitoring — teachers can see more children's work during a lesson than is possible when using books, particularly when working with a small group.

Can children go off task or switch between apps during lessons?

No. Teachers have the ability to lock devices into a single app or website during a lesson. This means children can only access the tool they are using for that specific task and cannot switch between apps or become distracted by other content.

This feature supports focus, reduces off-task behaviour and helps maintain a calm, purposeful learning environment. It also ensures that all children remain fully engaged with the learning activity, while still allowing teachers to quickly unlock devices when it is appropriate to move on to the next stage of the lesson.

How is my child's data kept safe, and how do you ensure GDPR compliance?

We take data privacy extremely seriously. All iPads are managed securely by the school's IT system, and children do not store personal data on their devices. Apps used in school are carefully selected, vetted and approved to ensure they meet strict UK GDPR and data-protection standards, and no data is shared with third parties for marketing or commercial purposes.

Each device is enrolled in a secure management system, meaning the school can control settings, install apps, and remotely lock or wipe a device if necessary. Children cannot download apps independently, create personal accounts, or access unapproved services.

In short, your child's information is protected at all times through robust technical controls, careful app selection, and compliance with national data-protection legislation.

D School iPads vs Smartphones

How is school iPad use different from smartphone?

This is an important and very reasonable question. Research into educational technology helps us understand the distinction clearly.

Smartphones are typically used for social media, messaging, gaming and the passive consumption of content — activities that research links to reduced attention spans, disrupted sleep patterns and increased anxiety, particularly in young people. School iPads, by contrast, are used as purposeful learning tools within a structured, teacher-led environment.

The key differences are:

- Purpose and intent — every task on a school iPad has a clear educational objective set by the teacher. There is no passive scrolling or self-directed entertainment.
- Control and oversight — teachers can see every child's screen in real time, lock devices instantly, and restrict access to only the apps and content needed for the lesson.
- No social features — children cannot message one another, access social media or use any communication platforms on school iPads.
- Limited and structured use — iPad use amounts to approximately one hour per day, broken into short, focused tasks. This is very different from the open-ended, unstructured nature of personal smartphone use.
- Active, not passive — research consistently shows that harm associated with screens relates predominantly to passive use. On school iPads, children are always actively engaged: writing, problem-solving and responding to tasks

Most importantly, the children are learning how to use digital technology as a tool, that when used in the right way at the right time, can be used to support and enhance learning. Their future is digital and by providing a structured and guided approach they will leave the Marist better equipped and ready to start their secondary school journey.

E Wellbeing & Health

What about screen time and eye health?

We understand concerns about screen time. That is why iPad use is always limited and purposeful: sessions are short and spaced throughout the day and children are taught about healthy posture and the importance of regular breaks.

Research is clear that screen use in short, controlled bursts—like the way we use iPads in school—does not damage children’s eyes. The main issue linked to excessive screen use is temporary digital eye strain, which has been shown to occur in 50-70% of children when near-screen usage is continuous for over 2 hours. The way that we are using iPads ensures that children are never exposed to this much continuous usage in school; it is always limited and purposeful.

Myopia (short-sightedness) is associated with extended periods of close work and insufficient outdoor time, rather than screens alone. Regular time outdoors has been shown to help protect children’s developing vision. This can happen with any prolonged near-focus activity, including reading a book or writing on paper.

Because our iPad use is limited, purposeful and broken into short activities, and children continue to have plenty of outdoor play and movement, it fits well within what eye-health experts consider safe and healthy for primary-aged pupils.

How does this help children with additional needs?

iPads can significantly reduce barriers to learning by allowing children to:

- Adjust text size and layout to suit their needs
- Use audio features to support understanding of instructions
- Access tools that support organisation and independence
- Use assistive tools for those who find handwriting or fine motor tasks challenging
- Facilitate discrete support, correction and feedback helping to build confidence

F Monitoring Impact & Contingency

How is the school monitoring the impact of the devices?

We take the evaluation of this initiative very seriously. Our monitoring approach includes:

- Regular lesson observations with a focus on children's attention, behaviour and the overall quality of teaching and learning
- Pupil attainment data reviewed at regular intervals throughout the year through formal written assessments
- Regular pupil progress meetings with the assessment lead, as happens across all year groups

We have seen positive impacts on the learning or outcomes for many pupils, especially those who have additional learning needs; they have made excellent progress both in terms of attainment and confidence.

What if the technology fails?

Children continue to learn core skills using books and traditional methods throughout the year. The use of one-to-one devices in class is designed to enhance learning — it does not replace essential skills such as handwriting, reading and problem-solving. If technology is unavailable, lessons continue seamlessly.

Will iPads be used in lessons in KS1?

No. The use of one-to-one devices is for Key Stage 2 only and we have no intention of changing this in the future. Throughout KS1 pupils are building foundational skills and knowledge that will not benefit from the use of iPads throughout the curriculum. At KS1 iPads are used solely to support the computing curriculum.

G What Does the Research Say?

We believe it is important that our approach is grounded not only in professional experience and judgement, but in independent research. Below is a summary of the key evidence that supports our digital strategy.

Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) — Using Digital Technology to Improve Learning

The EEF — the UK's leading independent education research charity — is clear: it is not the technology itself that improves learning, but how it is used. When tablets are used purposefully to increase the quality of practice and the precision of teacher feedback, they stand a much better chance of improving outcomes. This is the foundation of our approach.

Key findings from independent research

- **Higgins et al. (2012) / EEF:** Consistent positive associations between technology use and learning outcomes for pupils aged 5–18, across multiple large-scale meta-analyses.
- **Chauhan (2017):** A medium positive effect of technology on learning effectiveness in primary school students compared to traditional instruction.
- **Black & Wiliam (1998) / Hattie (2009):** Formative assessment — including instant teacher feedback during a lesson — has an effect size of 0.4–0.7 on pupil achievement. Hattie ranked teacher feedback third out of 138 factors influencing achievement, with an effect size of 0.9. Our iPad system enables this at a scale not previously possible.
- **Frontiers in Psychology (2025):** ICT has a significant positive effect on primary pupils' language skills and subject knowledge when thoughtfully implemented.
- **Department for Education Parliamentary Evidence (2023):** Harm from screens in children is linked to passive use — social media, gaming, displacement of sleep and activity. Purposeful, structured educational use is categorically different.
- **OECD (2025):** Access to technology alone does not guarantee educational gain — successful implementation requires strong pedagogy. This is why our programme is teacher-led, not device-led.

